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(54) **MEAT PROCESSING ASSEMBLY**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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See application file for complete search history.

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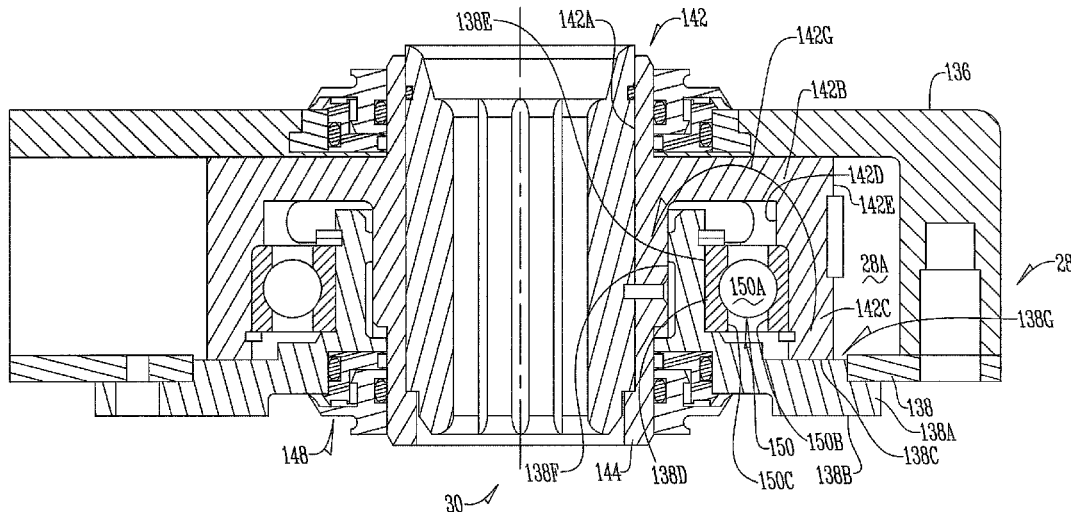
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An improved processing assembly having a meat emulsion pump connected to a stuffing horn. The stuffing horn positioned to fill casings with meat emulsion which form a strand of processed meat that is received by a twister, then a linker, and subsequently deposited on a conveyor.

**24 Claims, 16 Drawing Sheets**



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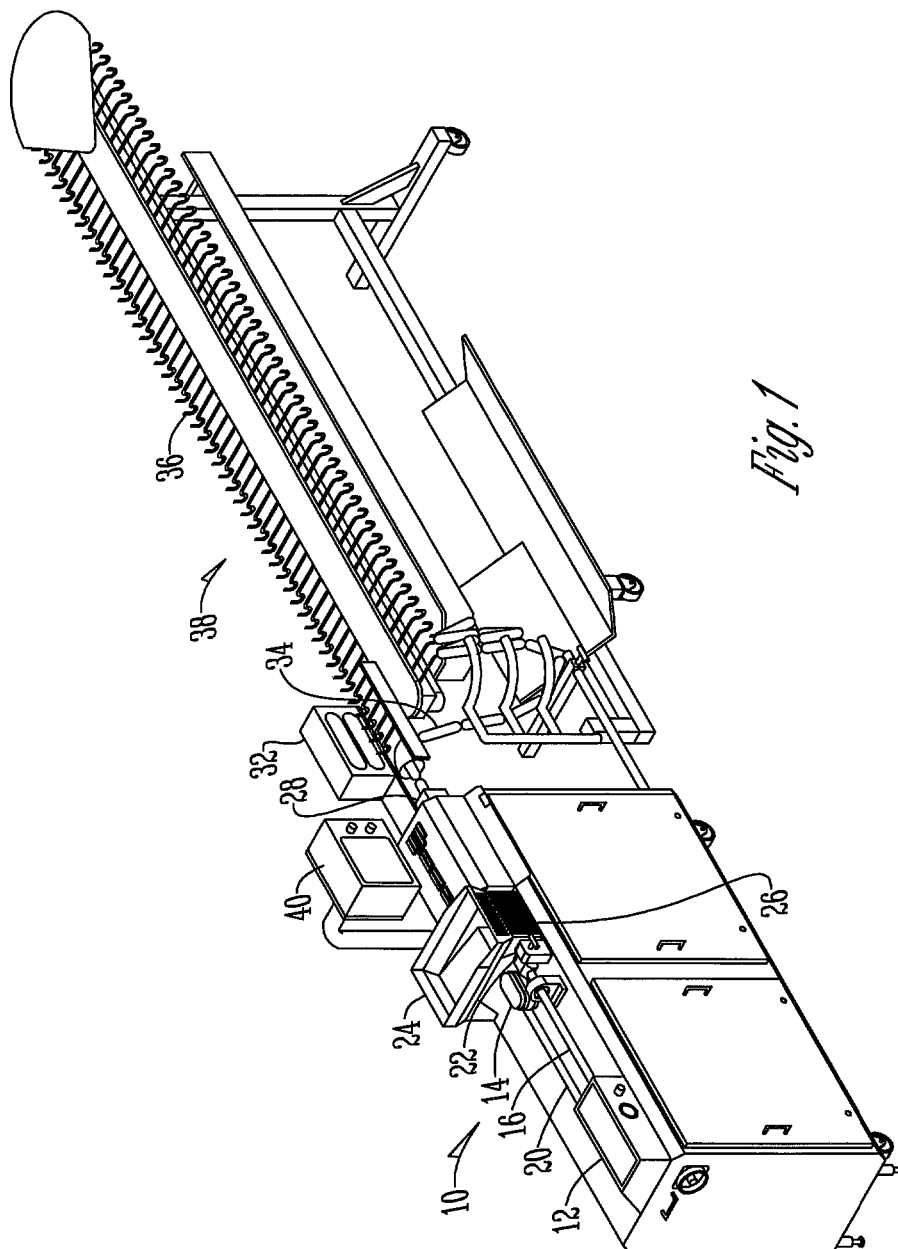
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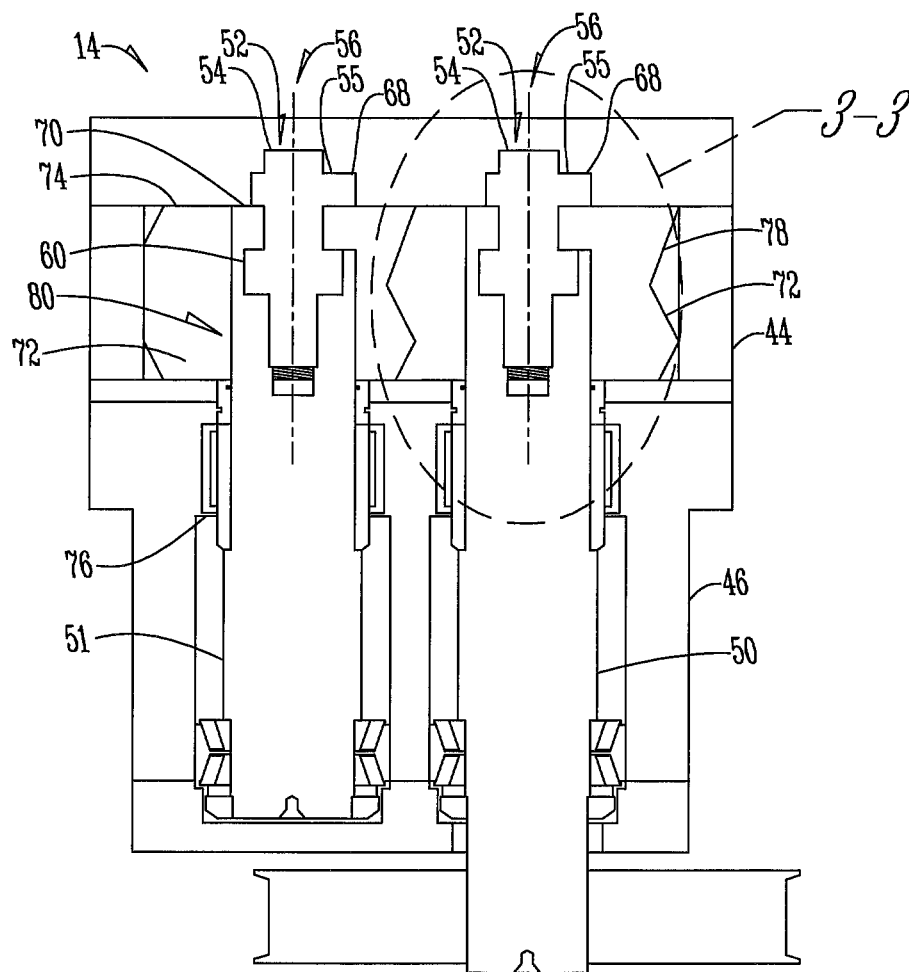
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*Fig. 2*

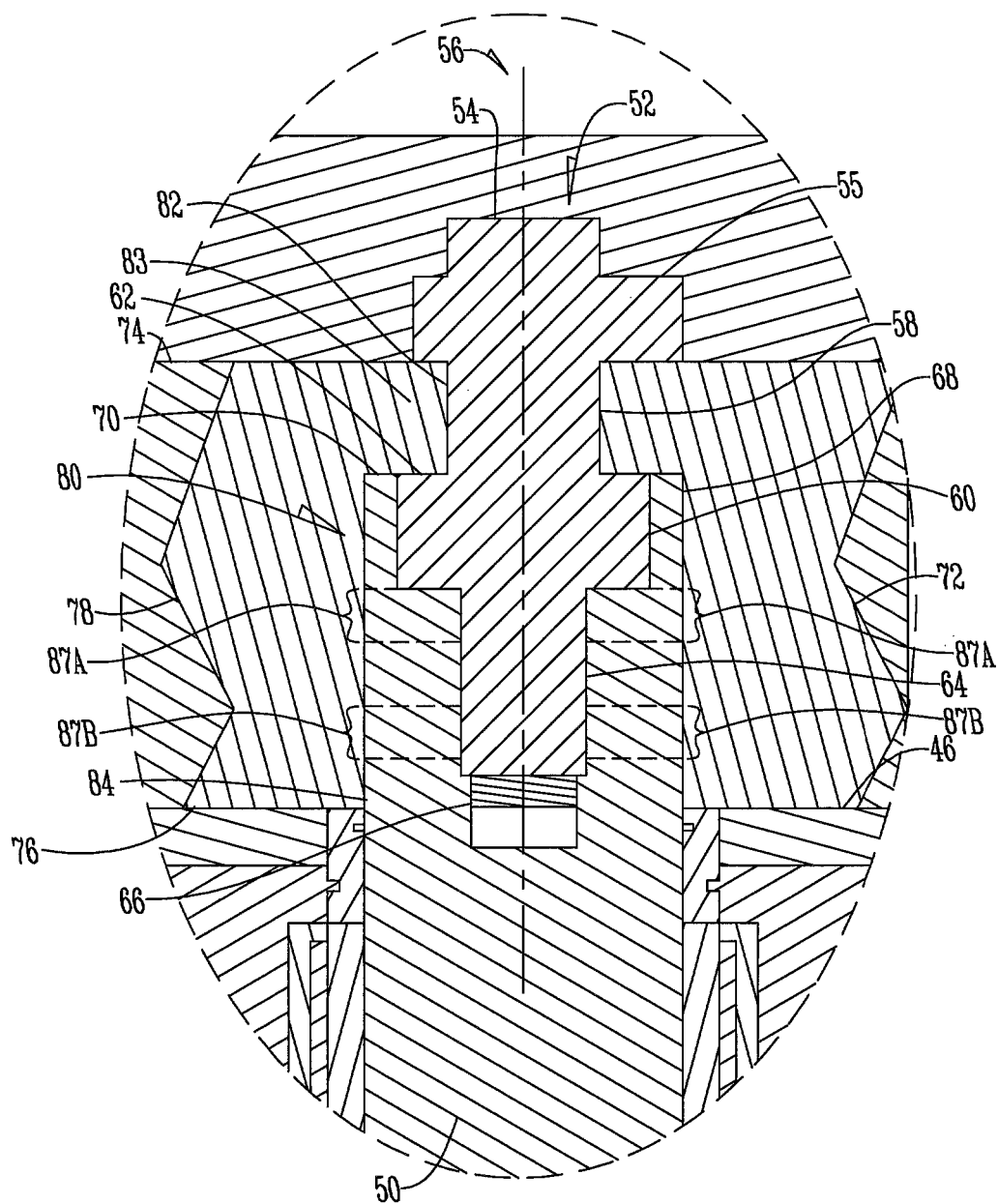
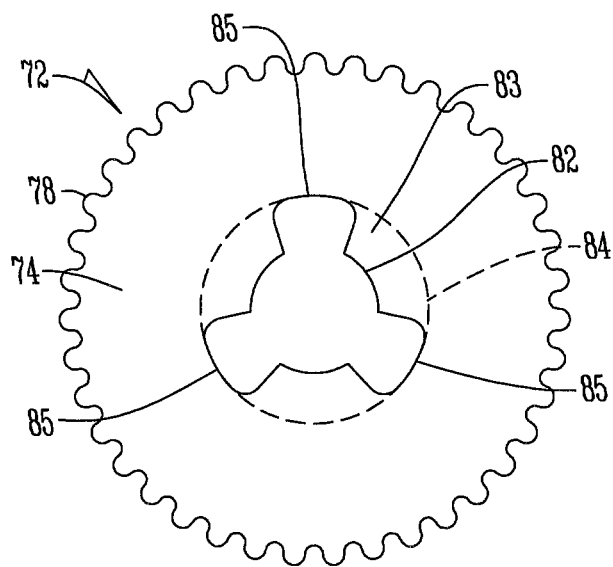
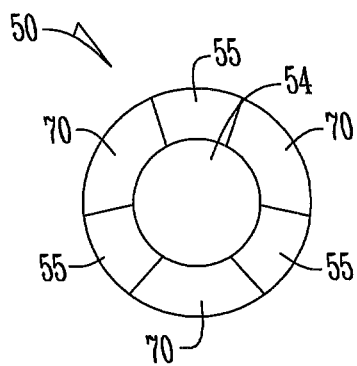


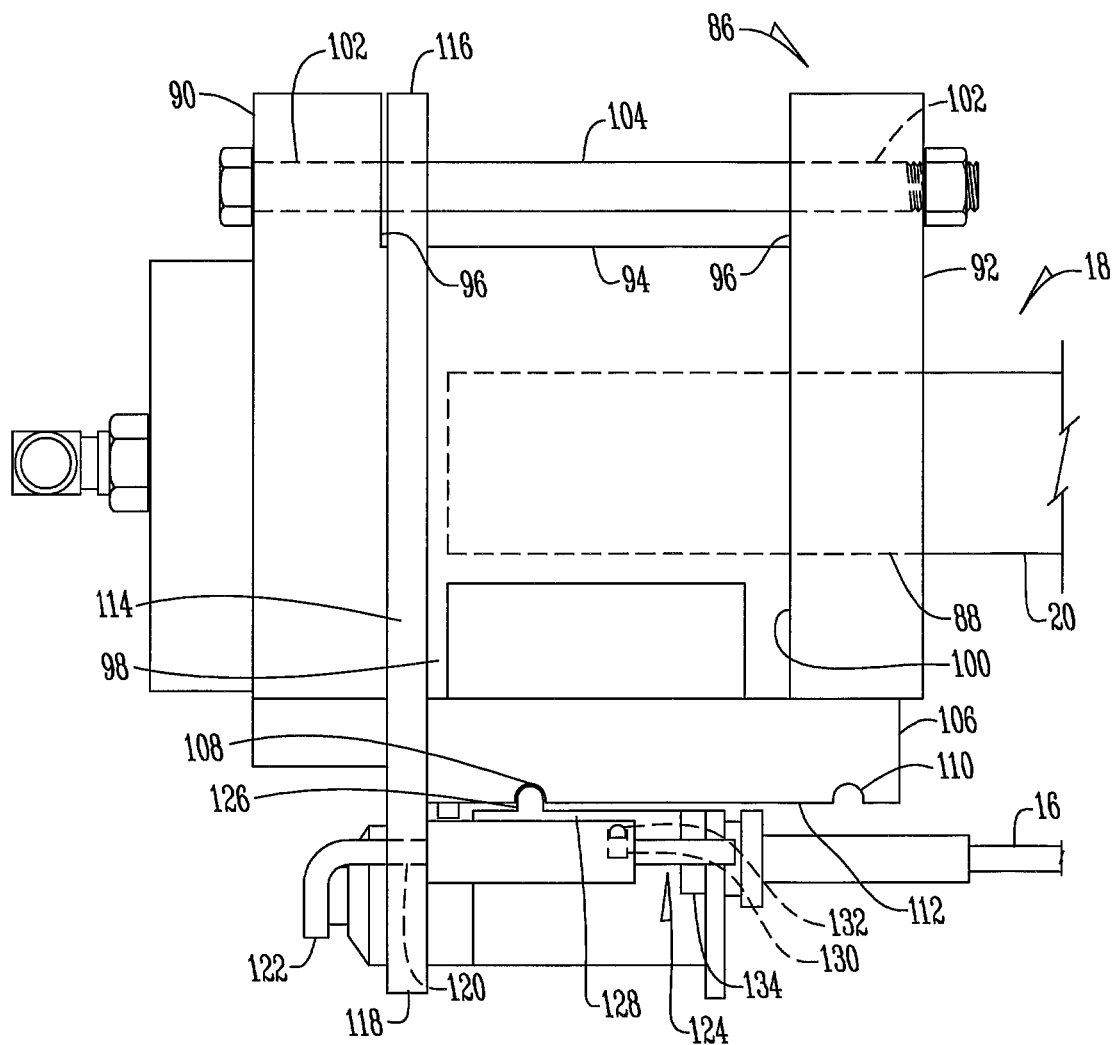
Fig. 3



*Fig. 4*



*Fig. 5*



*Fig. 6*

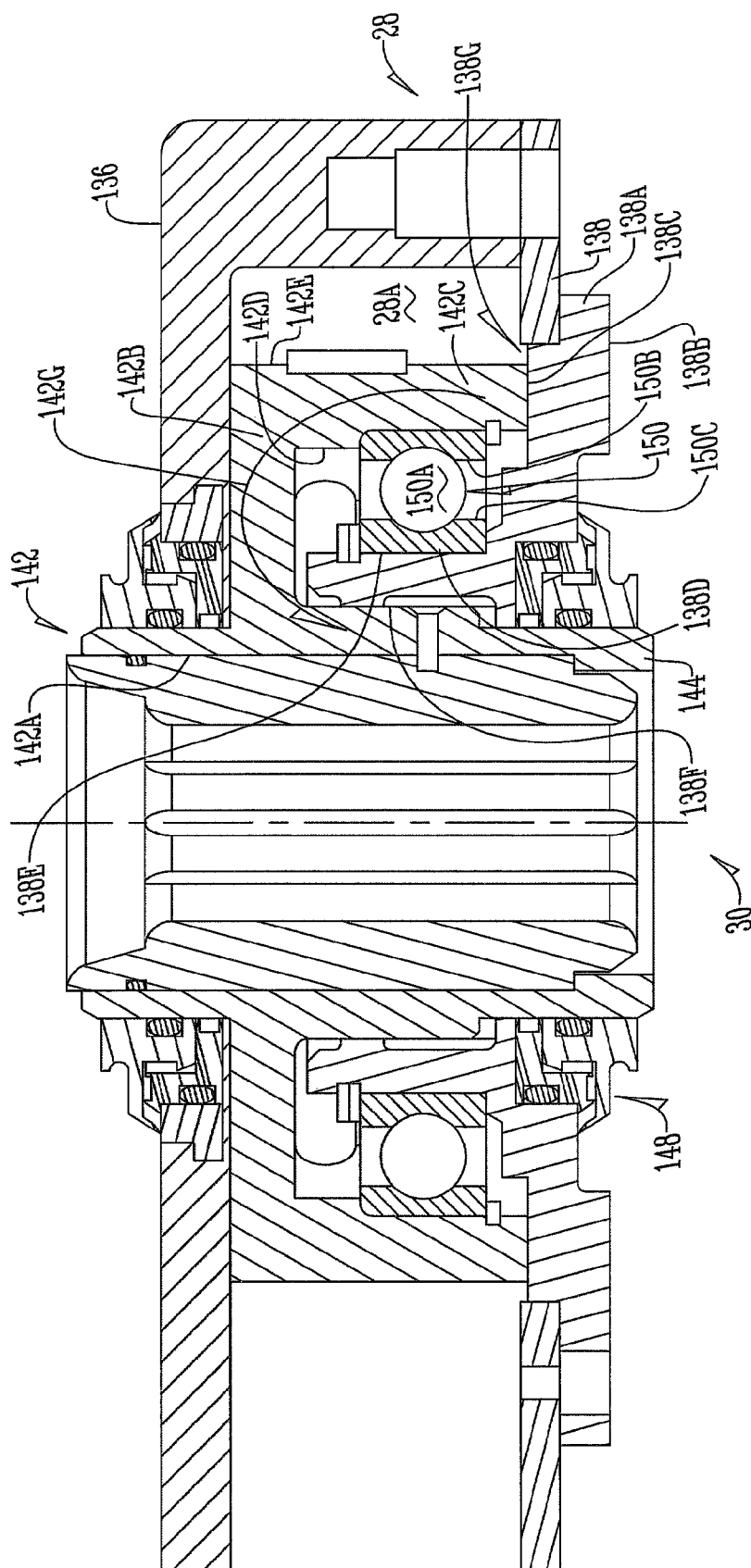


Fig. 7

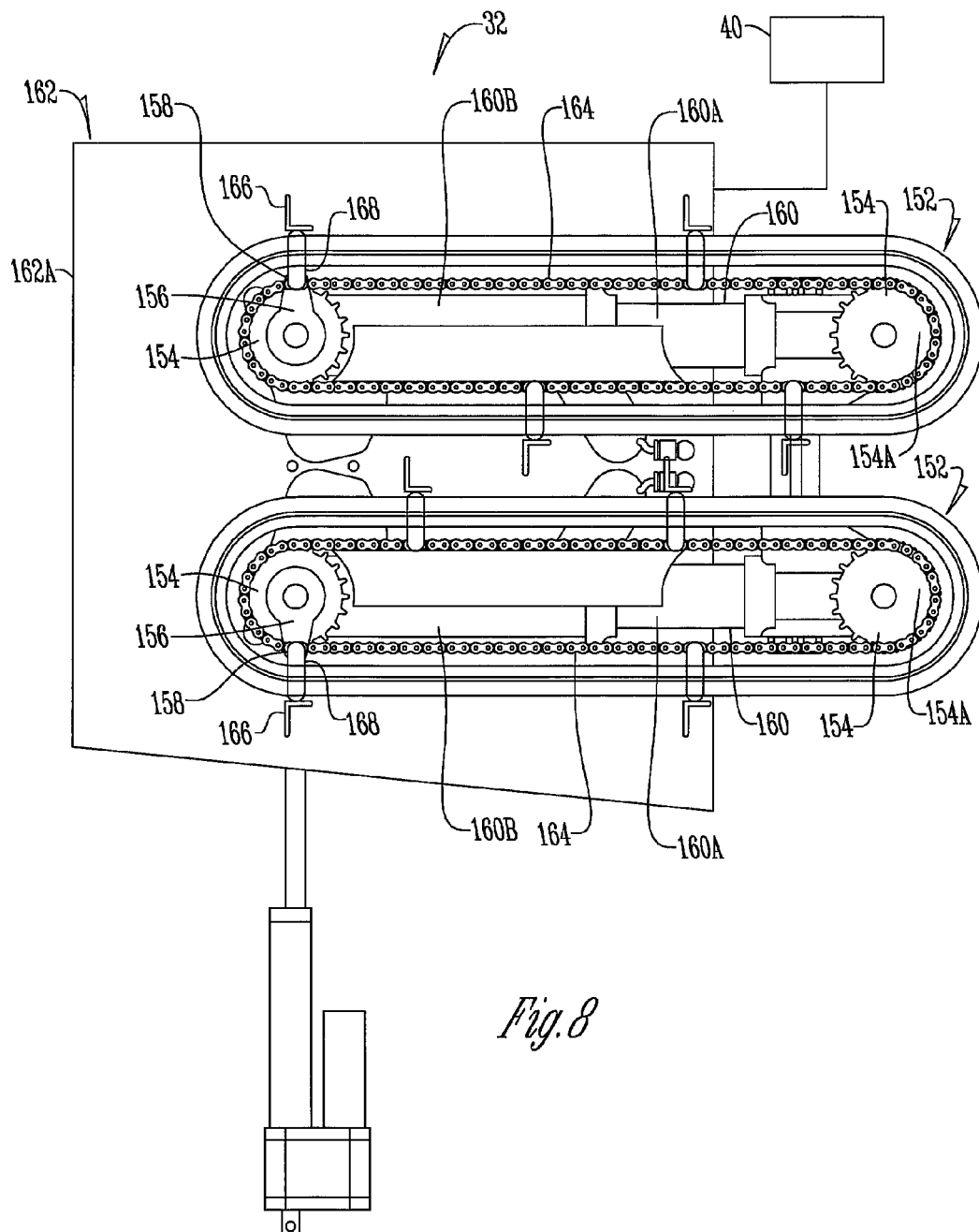
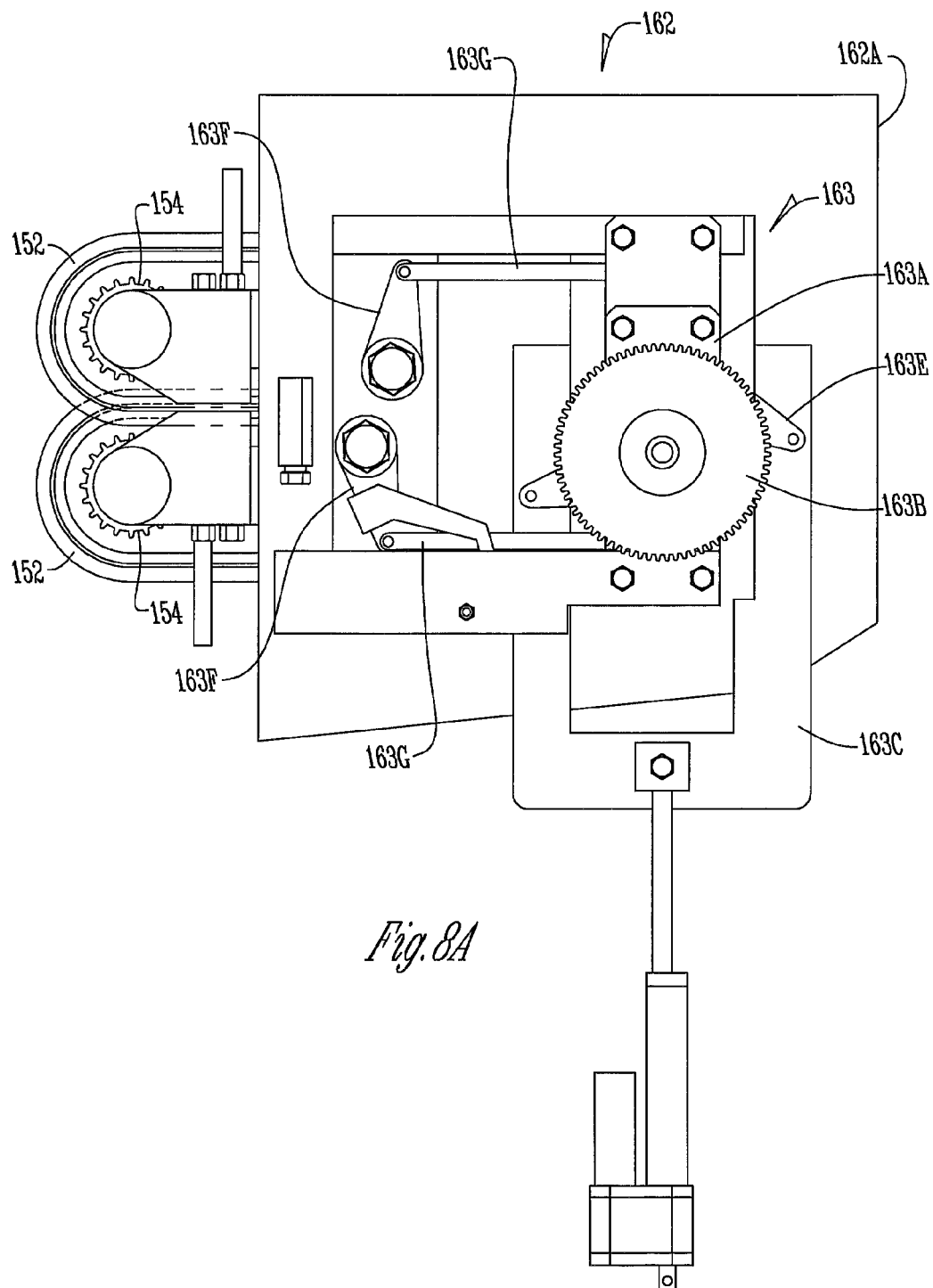
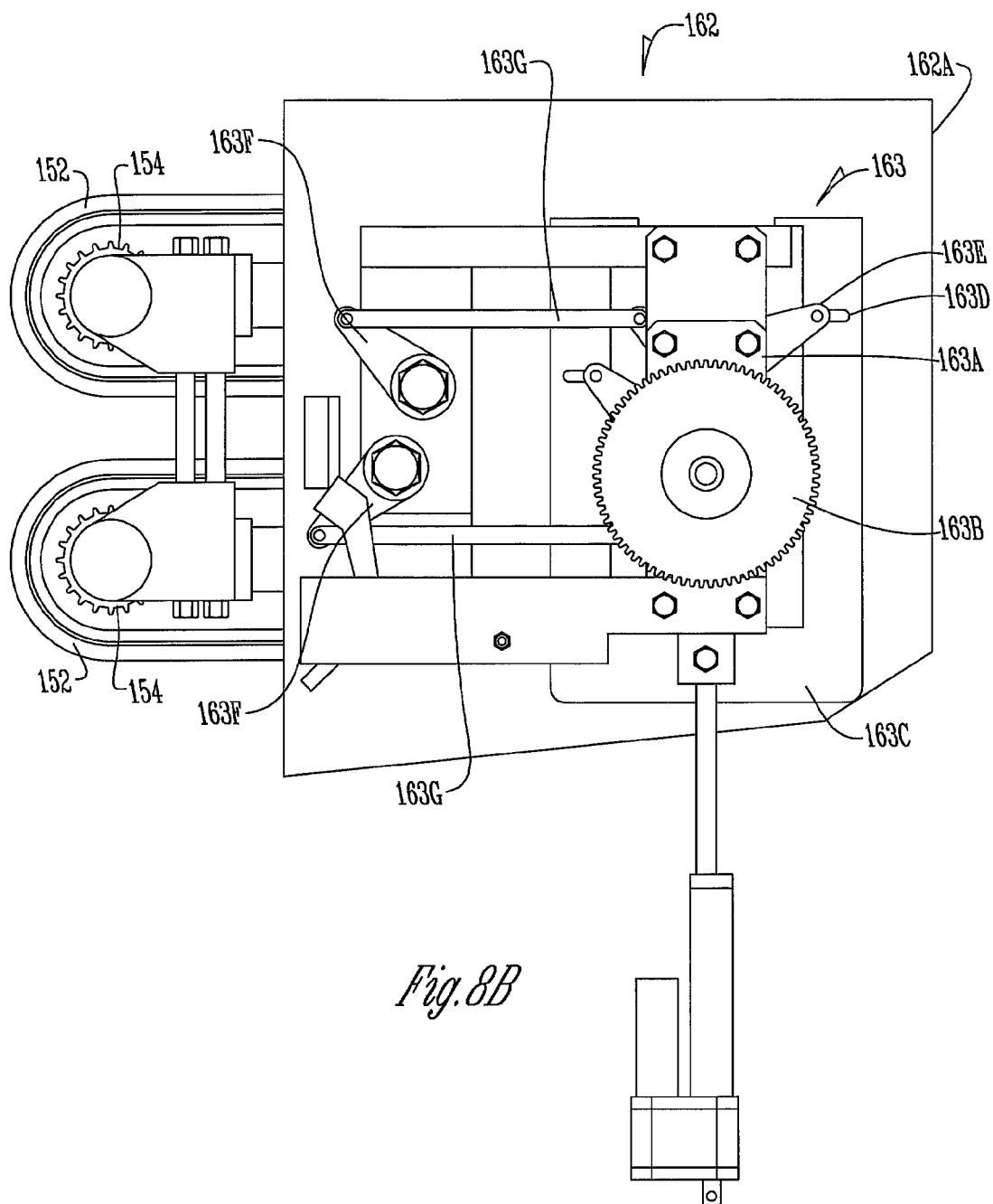
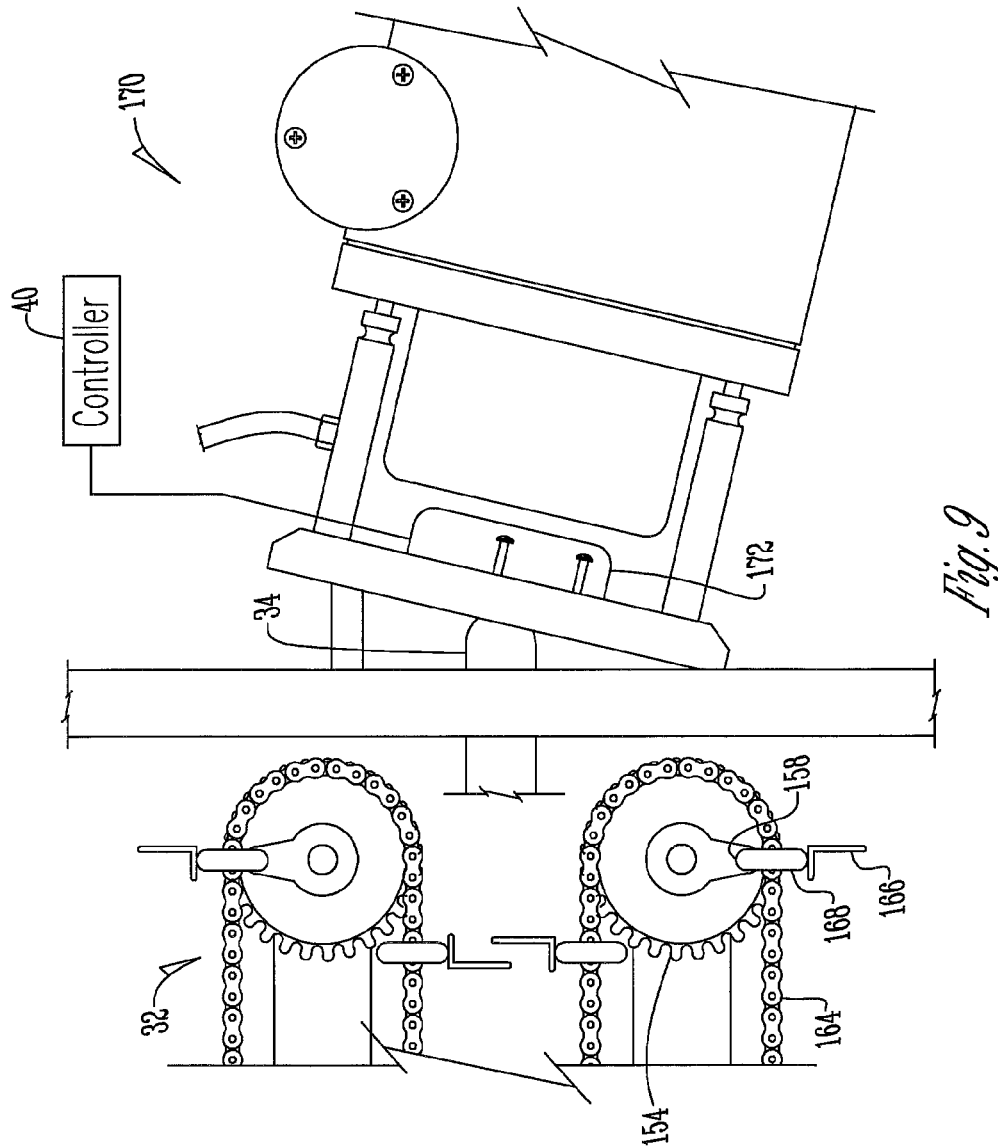
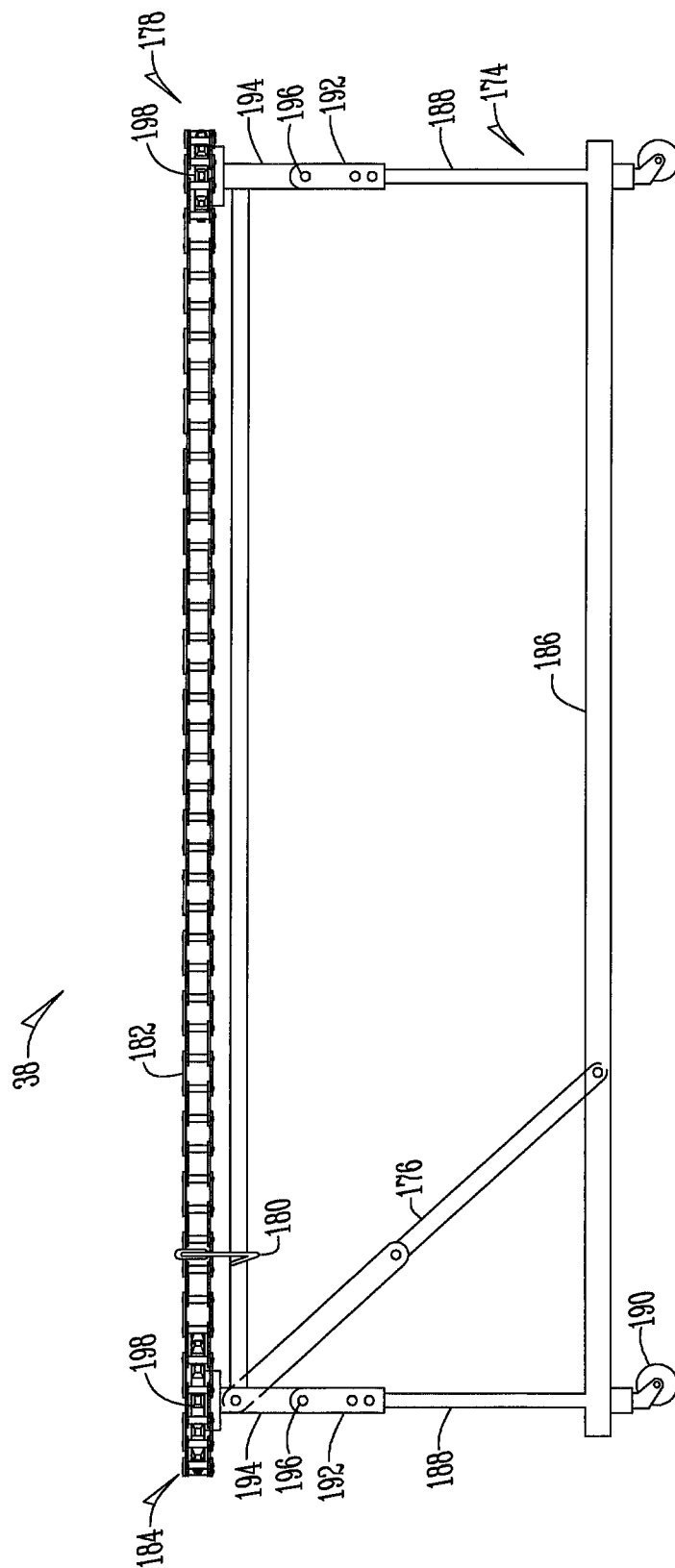


Fig. 8

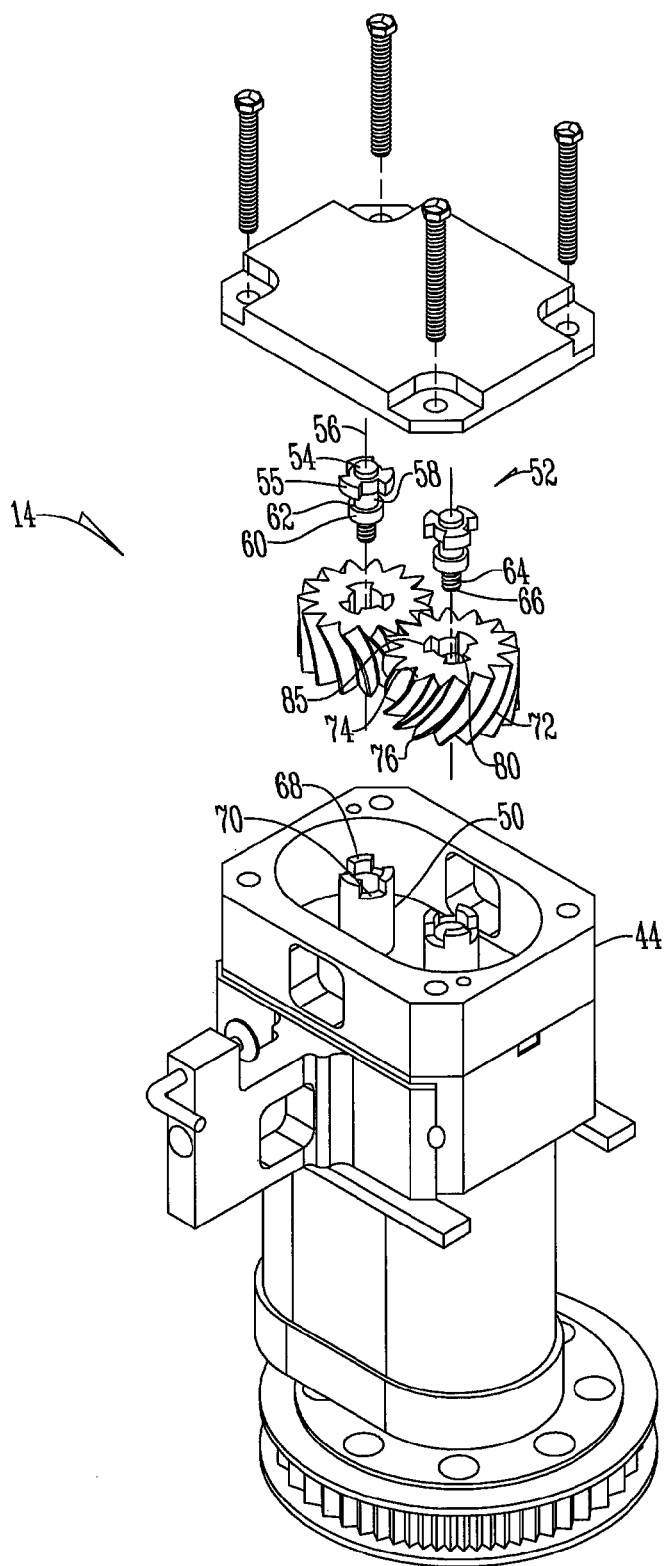




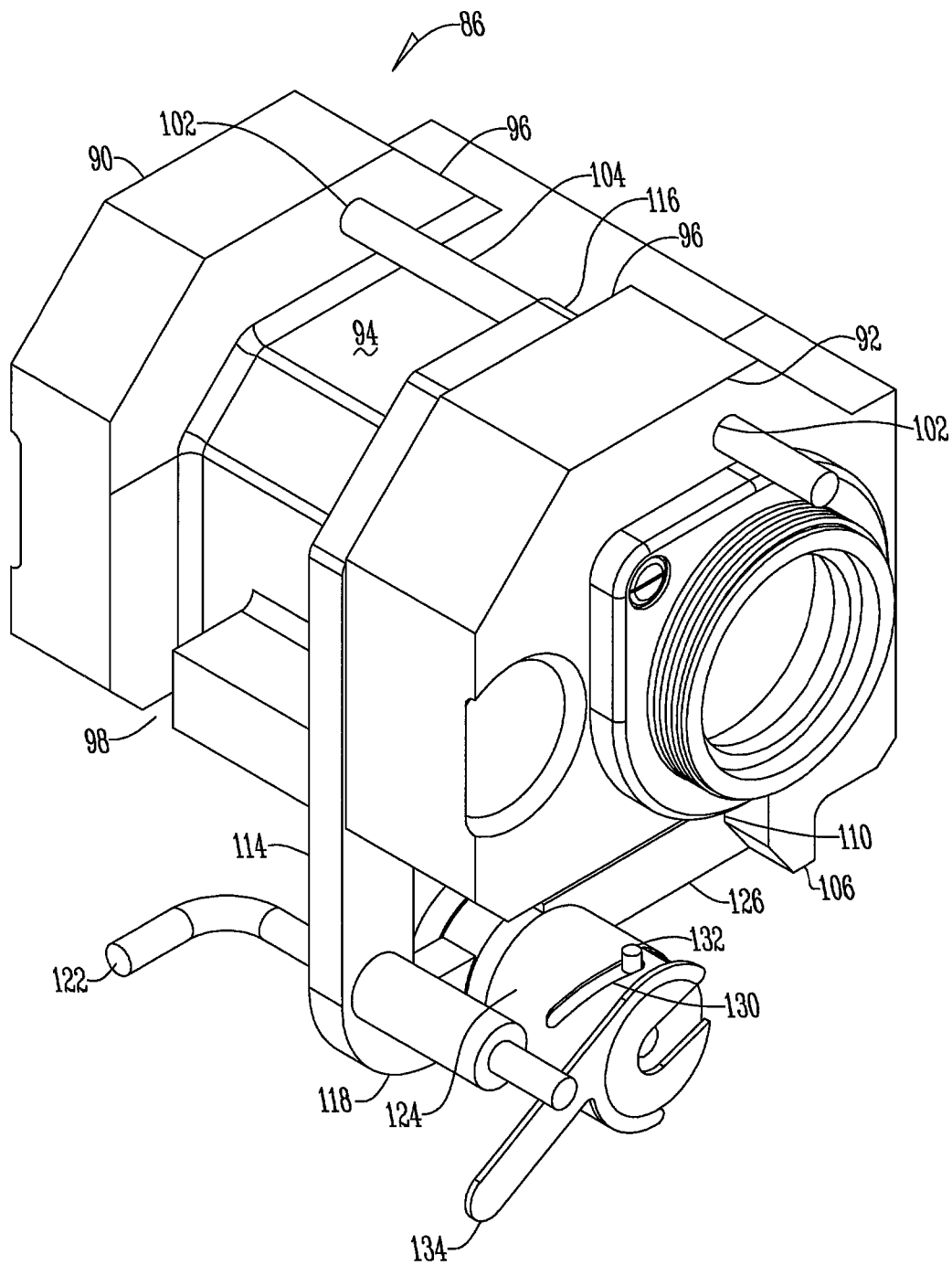




*Fig. 10*



*Fig. 11*



*Fig. 12*

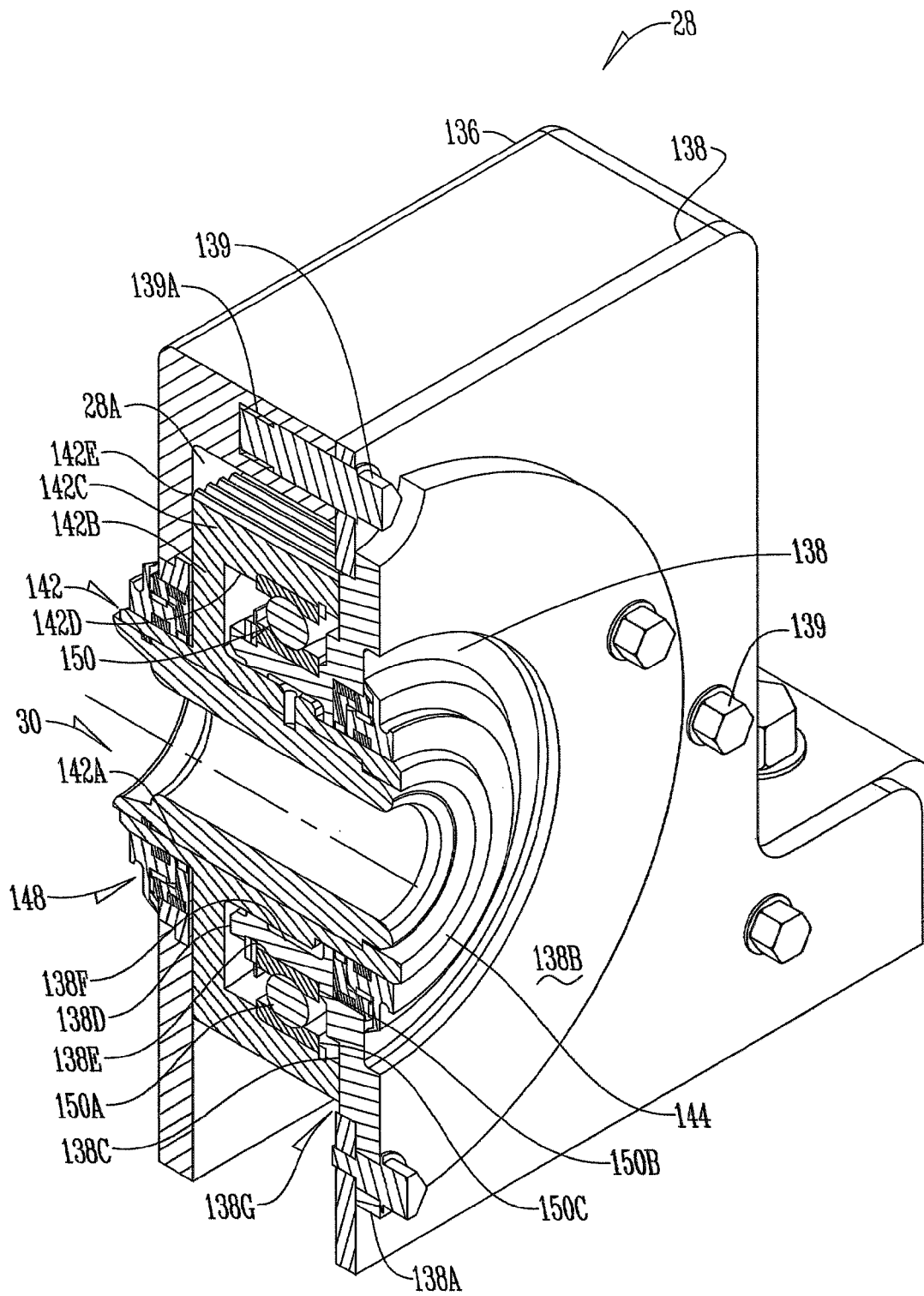
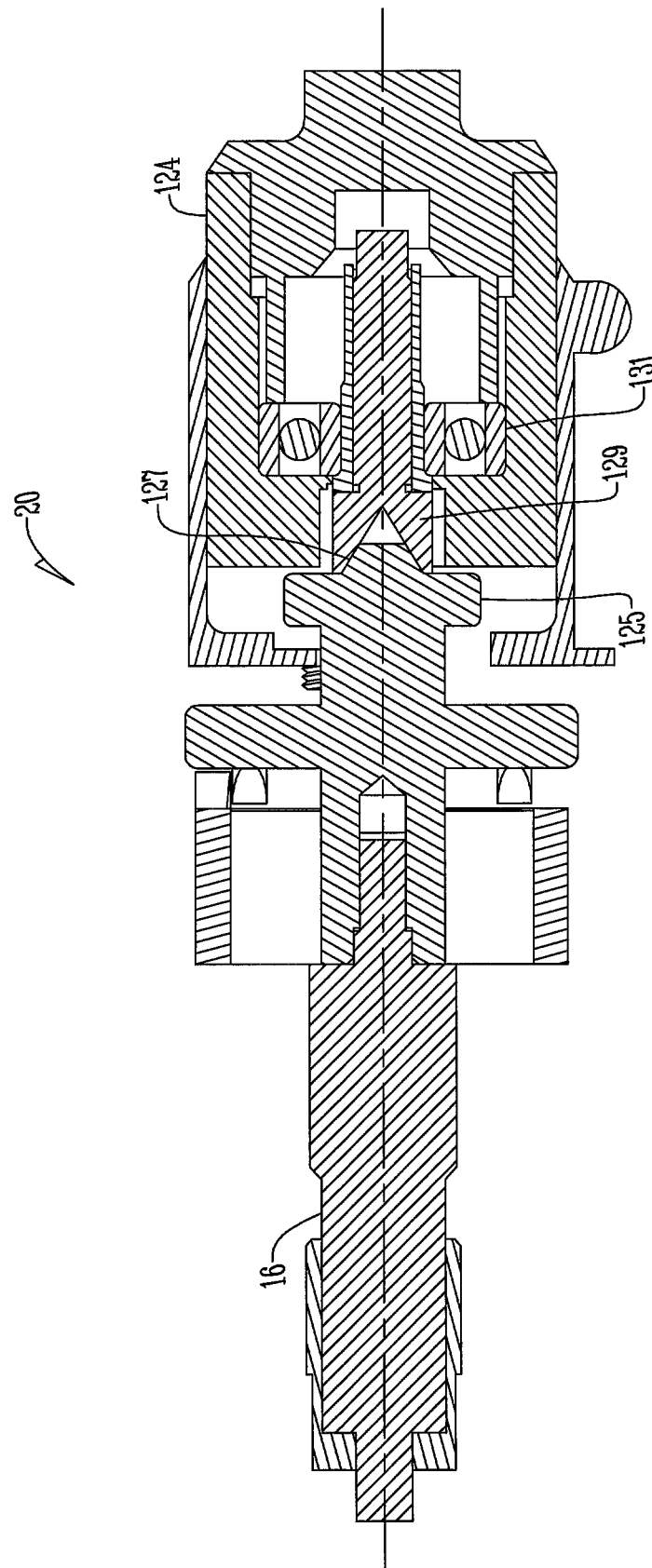
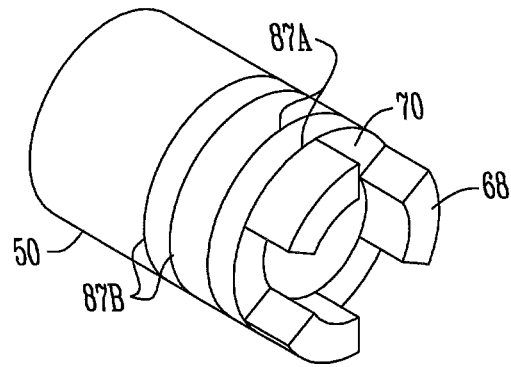


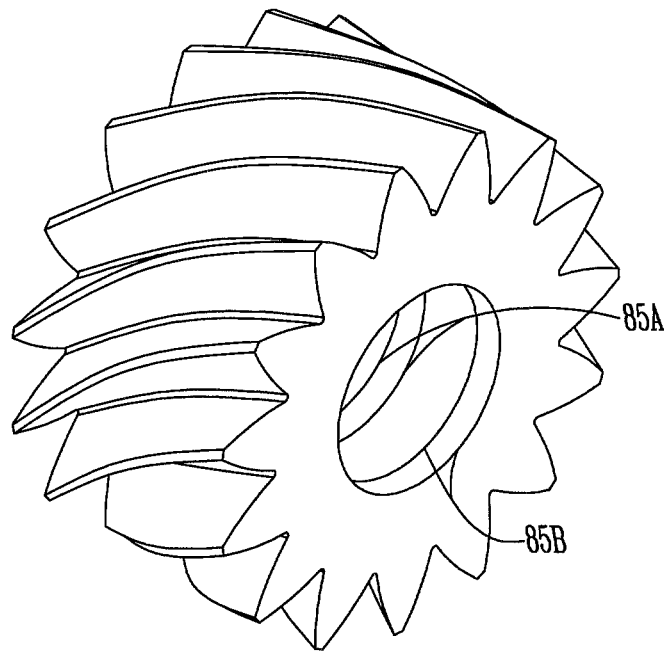
Fig. 13



*Fig. 14*



*Fig. 15*



*Fig. 16*

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**MEAT PROCESSING ASSEMBLY****CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

This application is a division of U.S. Ser. No. 12/732,391 filed Mar. 26, 2010 which is based on U.S. Ser. No. 61/254,918 filed Oct. 26, 2009.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

This invention is directed toward a meat processing assembly and more specifically to improvements for the meat pump, the stuffing horn, the twister, the linker, and the conveyor.

Meat processing assemblies are known in the art and over the years improvements have been made to enhance speed and efficiency when making linked meat products. Despite these improvements, deficiencies still exist. For example, removing gears from a meat pump remains a difficult time consuming process. With the twister, the use of a seal is still susceptible to wear and does not maximize heat reduction. To adjust the linker for different products require separate linker heads. Finally, aligning the conveyor with the linker can be difficult particularly when the floor is uneven. Therefore, a need exists in the art for a meat processing assembly that addresses these deficiencies.

An object of the invention is to provide a pump that allows for the easy installation and removal of the gears.

Another object of the invention is to provide for the easy adjustment of the stuffing horn for different casing types.

A further objective of the present invention is to provide for the easy adjustment, installation, and removal of chains on a linker for use with different length sausages.

Another object of the invention is to provide a linker that maintains constant tension in the linking chains.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide an adjustable chain spacing of a linker to eliminate backing plates, different sprocket sizes, and different shaft spacing.

A still further objective of the present invention is to provide an adjustable conveyor that may be fixed to a floor.

These and other objectives will be apparent to one of skill in the art based upon the following disclosure.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

A meat processing assembly having an improved meat emulsion pump that allows for easier installation and removal of gears within a pump housing. A horn adjustment assembly that permits the position of a stuffing horn to be adjusted to eliminate the need for removing and replacing stuffing horns of different lengths for use with different casing materials. An improved twister that reduces heat through use of a non-contact bearing isolator that shields the bearing from the exterior environment. An improved linker that, through use of pistons connected to idler sprockets, self-adjusts the linker assembly for different recipes and the easy removal and replacement of linker chains and constant tension on the chains. The spacing is also adjustable for different calibers and eliminates the need for adjustable backing plates, sprocket sizes, and shaft spacings. A process control system that permits links to be counted and controlled based on sensed data. Finally, an improved conveyor that is adjustable to provide for easy positioning of the looper of the conveyor with the output end of the linker while maintaining a fixed base.

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**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES**

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a meat processing assembly; FIG. 2 is a side plan sectional view of the pump; FIG. 3 is a side plan sectional view of the pump; FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the pump helical gear; FIG. 5 is a top plan view of the pump shaft; FIG. 6 is a front plan view of the horn adjustment assembly; FIG. 7 is a side sectional view of the chuck; FIG. 8 is a side plan view of the linker; FIG. 8A is a side plan view of the linker; FIG. 8B is a side plan view of the linker; FIG. 9 is a side plan view of the process control system; FIG. 10 is a side plan view of the adjustable conveyor of the present invention; FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the pump; FIG. 12 is a perspective view of the horn adjustment assembly; FIG. 13 is a perspective view of the chuck; FIG. 14 is a side plan sectional view of the horn adjustment assembly; FIG. 15 is a perspective view of pump shaft; and FIG. 16 is a perspective view of the pump helical gear.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

Referring to the Figures, the meat processing assembly 10 has a frame 12 with a meat emulsion pump 14 connected to a source of meat emulsion (not shown). A stuffing horn 16 is slidably and operably connected to the pump 14 and is longitudinally moveable by a horn adjustment assembly 18 that is slidably mounted to guide shaft or cylinder carriage 20. An elongated shirred casing 22 is mounted on horn 16 from casing hopper 24 where the forward end of the horn 16 terminates at casing filling station 26 adjacent twister housing 28. The twister 28 has a hollow rotatable chuck 30 which receives filled casing 22 and rotates the casing 22 before the filled casing moves into linker 32. The completed strands of sausage 34 exit the linker 32 and are deposited on hooks 36 of conveyor 38. The foregoing components are connected to and controlled by computer control 40.

Pump 14 has a gear housing 44, a pump housing weldment 46, and a pulley driven drive shaft 50 that extends through a bore in the weldment 46 along with an idler shaft 51. Attached to the drive and idlers shafts 50 and 51, and disposed within gear housing 44, is a pair of gear locks 52. The gear locks 52 have a head 54 with a plurality of protrusions 55 that extend outwardly from a central axis 56 of the lock 52. Below the head 54 is a channel or groove 58 that separates the head 54 from the body 60 of the lock 52. The body 60 has a diameter greater than the channel 58 such that it forms a shoulder 62. Extending from the body 60 is a stem 64 that has a threaded end 66. The threaded end 66 of the lock 52 is matingly received by a threaded bore in the shaft 50.

The top end of the shaft 50 has a plurality of protrusions 68 that extend upwardly and are positioned around the outer perimeter of the shaft such that gaps or grooves 70 are formed therebetween. A pair of helical gears 72 are removably mounted to the shafts 50 and 51 and secured with the locks 52. The gears 72 have a top surface 74, a bottom surface 76, and a plurality of helically formed teeth 78 on the outer perimeter of the gear 72. Centrally disposed through the gear 72 is a bore 80. The bore 80 has a first section 82 that extends from the top surface 74 to a shelf 83 and a second section 84 that extends from the shelf 83 to the bottom surface 76. The diameter of the second section 84 of the bore 80 is slightly larger than the

diameter of the shaft 50. The diameter of the first section 82 of the bore 80 is slightly larger than the diameter of the channel 58 on the gear lock 52. The shelf 83 has a plurality of openings 85 that align with the protrusions 55 on the head 54 to form a key slot. A top band 85A and a bottom band 85B are located on the second section 84 of the bore 80 and have a non-contact area therebetween. The bands 85A and 85B fit within steps 87A and 87B on the outer surface of the shaft 50. This allows the gear to become free when jacked-up about 6 mm.

To mount the gears 72 on the shafts 50, the gear 72 is placed over the head 54 of the gear lock 52 and the gear 72 is rotated such that the openings 85 are aligned with protrusions 55. In addition, the protrusions 55 are aligned with protrusions 68 of the drive shaft 50. Once aligned, the gear is placed over the head 54 of the gear lock 52 such that the shelf 83 of the gear 72 fit within the gaps 70 of the shaft 50 and engage shoulder 62 of the body 60 of the gear lock 52. In this position, both the gear 72 and the gear lock 52 are in a raised position in relation to shaft 50. To lower the gear 72, the gear lock 52 is rotated such that the threaded end 66 of stem 64 is matingly received in the threaded bore of shaft 50. As the gear lock 52 is lowered so to is the gear 72. To lock the gear 72 in place, the gear lock 52 is rotated to a position such that the protrusions 55 cover and are vertically aligned with the shelf 82 of the gear 72 preventing vertical movement of the gear 72. Once rotated into position, the gear drops part way onto the shaft until bands 85A and 85B contact steps 87A and 87B. At this point the top of the gear 72 is just below protrusions 55. Rotating the lock 52 forces the gear 72 down and bands 85A and 85B into full engagement with steps 87A and 87B. The bores in the gears 72 and the exterior surface of shafts 50 are stepped such that engagement occurs only over a short vertical distance.

To remove the gear 72, the gear lock 52 is rotated the opposite direction, thus raising the gear 72 and the gear lock 52 in relation to the shaft 50 and the weldment 46. Once raised, the protrusions 55 are aligned with openings 85 and the gear 72 is lifted over and off the gear lock 52. The gear 72 and shaft 50 are thus stepped so that engagement occurs at the top and a bottom of the gear 72 (at 62), allowing for minimum vertical movement of the gear in relation to the shaft 50 when removing the gear, as well as a tighter fit between gear and shaft without causing jams. Thus, a simplified pump has been shown where it is easier to assemble and remove the gear.

The horn adjustment assembly 18 is attached to a cylinder carriage 20 and stuffing horn 16. The assembly 18 has a positioning member 86 that is slidably mounted to the cylinder shaft 20 through a generally centrally located bore 88. The positioning member 86 is of any size and shape and preferably is a single piece of machineable composite material having a first section or end 90, a second section or end 92, and a channel 94 disposed inbetween and forming shoulders 96 on both the first and second sections 90, 92. Cut within the channel 94 are at least two grooves 98, 100 that preferably are aligned parallel to the shoulders 96. The first and second sections 90, 92 have apertures 102 positioned above the channel 94 in spaced alignment that receive a pivot pin 104. A flange 106 extends from the bottom of the positioning member 86 and has at least two slots 108, 110 formed in the bottom edge 112 of the flange 106.

A lever 114 having a first end 116 and a second end 118 is rotatably mounted to the pivot pin 104 at the first end 116 and the stuffing horn 16 at the second end 118. The lever 114 is formed to fit within the grooves 98, 100 on the positioning member 86. Positioned adjacent the second end 118 is an aperture 120 that receives a locking pin 122.

Mounted rotatably about the stuffing horn 16 is a locking bracket 124. The locking bracket 124 has a locking member

126 that extends outwardly and transversely to a central section 128. The locking member 126 is formed and positioned to fit within slots 108, 110 on the bottom flange 106 of the positioning member 86. The central section 128 preferably is a hollow cylindrical tube that attaches to the stuffing horn 16 and has a cam slot 130 that receives a cam follower 132 attached to the lever 114. Extending outwardly and transversely from the central section 128 is an arm 134. The arm 134 is positioned such that it will disable rotation of the locking member 126.

When in a first locked position, the lever 114 is received in the first groove 98 of the positioning member 86, the locking member 126 is received in the first slot 108 of the flange 106, and the arm 134 engages the locking pin 124 to prevent rotation of the locking member 126 out of the slot 108. To unlock, the locking pin 124 is retracted such that it does not engage the arm 134 and the locking bracket 124 is permitted to rotate about the stuffing horn 16 such that the locking member 126 is removed from the slot 108. The cam slot 130 and cam follower 132 limit the amount of rotation of the locking bracket 124. Once the locking bracket 124 is released, the lever 114, along with the stuffing horn 16 and locking bracket 124, are raised such that the lever 114 is removed from the first groove 98. In locking the horn 16 into the carriage 20, the cam action forces locking bracket 124 to act on a flange 125 on the horn 16 forcing a cone shaped boss 127 on the rear end of the horn 16 into a cone shaped receptacle 129 held by a bearing 131 within the lever assembly. In doing so, the horn 16 is positioned and secured, but free to rotate. Also pin 104 is threaded into the lever 116, but free to move back and forth within holes in the carriage sections 90 and 92. After removal, the lever 114 is slid along a pivot pin 104, aligned with the second groove 100, and then lowered to be received within the second groove 100. The locking pin 124 is then retracted to permit the locking bracket 124 to be rotated back to a second locked position where the locking member 126 is received in the second slot 110. The locking pin 124 is then released to engage the arm 134 and hold the locking bracket 124 in a second locked position. This arrangement provides the advantage of being able to easily and quickly adjust the effective length of the stuffing horn 16 with respect to the positioning member 86 without having to remove and replace stuffing horns 16 having different lengths.

Although the above describes a first locked position and a second locked position, additional locked positions are contemplated such as a third, fourth and so on. The same teaching above can be extrapolated by one of ordinary skill in the art to accomplish a countless number of locked positions.

The twisting housing 28 includes a first housing section 136 and a second housing section 138 that are matingly held together by suitable screws or bolts 139 in aligned threaded apertures 139A.

A pulley 142 includes a sleeve 144 and extends outwardly to engage the second housing member 138. Bearing isolators 148 extend around sleeve 144. Bearing 150 is mounted within housing 28 and is shielded from chuck 30 by the bearing isolator 148. By isolating the bearing 150 away from chuck 30, significantly less heat is produced as the bearing isolator 148 is non-contact.

Pulley 142 comprises a rotatable member and has a sleeve which extends in parallel relation to chuck 30. The interior edge 142A of pulley 142 and sleeve 144 engages the exterior surface of chuck 30 thereby holding the two together. When viewed from the side in a cut away view, sleeve 144 has a first arm 142B extending outwardly and away from the pulley 142 and chuck 30 in approximately perpendicular alignment thereto. First arm 142B is not centrally positioned on sleeve

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144, and instead is positioned proportionally more towards a first side of sleeve 144. First arm 142B terminates in second arm 142C. Second arm 142C extends in parallel spaced alignment to sleeve 144 and chuck 30 and away from the first side of sleeve 144 or towards the second side of sleeve 144. A space or channel is positioned between the exterior edge of sleeve 144 and the interior edge 142D of second arm 142C. In one arrangement, the space or channel is U-shaped. First arm 142B and second arm 142C passes through opening 28A in housing 28 thereby allowing for rotation of the pulley 142.

Bearing assembly 150 is positioned within the space or channel created by the first arm 142B, second arm 142C and sleeve 144 of pulley 142. Bearing assembly 150 has a bearing member 150A positioned between a first bearing race 150B and second bearing race 150C. First bearing race 150B is connected to the interior surface 142D of second arm 142C of pulley 142.

Second housing member 138 has a first arm 138A which extends from first housing member 136 towards chuck 30. First arm 138A has an exterior surface 138B which is exposed to the environment outside twister housing 28, and an interior surface 138C which is exposed to the environment inside opening 28A of twister housing 28. Second housing member 138 has a second arm 138D which extends in generally parallel spaced relation to chuck 30 and sleeve 144. Second arm 138D extends away from exterior surface 138B and towards first arm 142B. Second arm 138D extends into the opening or space between sleeve 144 and second arm 142C of pulley 142. Second bearing race 150C is connected to second arm 138D of second housing 138 on the surface 138E facing away from sleeve 144. A space 138F is positioned between the outwardly facing surface of sleeve 144, the face opposite chuck 30, and the inwardly facing surface of second arm 138D such that the second housing 138 is non-contact with pulley 142/sleeve 144. A space is also positioned between the end of second arm 142C of pulley 142 and the interior surface 138C of second housing member 138; and a space is also positioned between the interior surface of first housing 136 and first arm 142B of pulley 142, such that pulley 142 can rotate freely within and without contact to first housing 136 and second housing 138.

Positioned between and rotatably connecting the second housing member 138 to the sleeve 144 of pulley 142 is bearing isolator 148.

In operation, pulley 142 rotates within opening 28A of housing 28. That is pulley 142, sleeve 144, chuck 30, and first bearing race 150B. In contrast, first housing member 136 and second housing member 138 stay stationary. Space 138F insulates chuck 30 and sleeve 144 from heat generated by bearing assembly 150. Due to the insulating effects of space 138F, heat generated by bearing assembly 150 must travel along arrow 142G to reach chuck 30 which causes dissipation and causes chuck 30 to remain cooler than prior art chucks.

The linker 32 has a pair of linker chain assemblies 152 that are positioned in vertical alignment with one another. Each assembly 152 has a pair of sprockets 154 or pulleys with at least one sprocket connected to and driven by a motor (not shown). The sprockets include an extension 156 that includes an alignment slot 158. The second, or idler sprocket 154A is connected to a piston 160 that extends between the sprockets 154. The piston 160 is of any type and preferably is pneumatic and is connected to a source of compressed air (not shown). Also, preferably the piston 160 is telescopic wherein a first section 160A slides within a second section 160B when extended or retracted. Each assembly 152 is mounted to a support member 162.

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Support member 162, a part of the cabinet weldment, is utilized to permit movement of the assemblies 152 toward and away from one another. The support member 162 has a frame 162A that is secured to the assemblies 152. Attached within the frame is a movement assembly 163. The movement assembly 163 has a gear box 163A that connects a drive gear 163B to the sprockets 154 through gear trains (not shown) residing in gearboxes 163A that form the rotating external arms holding the drive sprockets 154. The drive gear 163B is mounted to the gearbox 163A which is mounted to the frame 162A. A U-shaped frame 163C has a pair of slots 163D disposed therethrough so that a pair of arms 163E are slidably disposed within the slots 163D. A pair of cams 163F are secured to the support member 162 and contain cam arms 163E that are attached on either side of the gearbox 163A so that vertical movement of the U-plate 163C causes movement of the arms 163E to slide within the slots 163D of the U-shaped member 163C and coincidentally pull a first linker chain assembly 152 toward the second linker chain assembly as best shown in FIGS. 8A and 8B. Thus, this movement allows for easy removal and installation of chains as well as finite spacing changes between the upper and lower chains from the touchscreen (formerly accomplished by manually adjusting the backing plates in and out).

Mounted to the sprockets 154 are a pair of chains 164. The chains 164 have one alignment pin 168 for each chain that is positioned to be received within the alignment slots 158 of the sprockets 154 to properly align the chains 164 based on the product size.

In operation, tension on the linking chain assembly 152 is created by activation of the piston 160 by the controller 40. More specifically, based upon the product size, the controller 40, which is connected to a source of compressed air, releases air to the pistons 160 causing the pistons 160 to extend to place tension on the chains 164.

To remove a chain 164, the controller 40 releases pressure to the pistons 160. Separating the chains with the conveyor adjusted to the product length forces the piston sections to collapse and allows for removal of the chains. Manually collapsing the pistons may also be performed. Simultaneously, the vertical movement assembly 163 of the support member 162 can be used to move linking chain assemblies 152 apart from one another. In this relaxed state, the chains 164 are easily removed from the sprockets 154. To add a new chain 164, the alignment pin 168 on the chain 164 is placed in the alignment slot 158 on the sprocket 154. Once inserted, the controller 40 is activated such that the assemblies 152 move toward one another and the piston 160 extends to place tension on the chain 164. The pneumatic pistons 160 allow for mounting sets of chains 164 of different length without the need for fine tuning the backing plates.

In one embodiment, counting sausage links is done by the controller. An encoder (i.e., pulse generator) is connected to the linking chains axis and provides a pulse stream to the controller. Preferably the pulse stream is scaled so that every 20 revolutions of the linking chain sprocket is at 13,500 counts with a roll over position set at zero. The controller counts the number of times the value transitions from 13,500 to zero.

When production begins, an initial count or snapshot is taken and stored in the controller for later calculation. As the device operates, pulse streams are sent to the controller and transitions through a set number (i.e., 1350) are counted by the controller. When production stops a second count or snapshot is taken and stored. The number of counts is calculated

from this information. The total number of counts divided by the counts per sausage produces a sausage count for the just completed sausage strand.

In another embodiment, counting sausage links is done with help from a sensor and the controller. The strand flow of the sausage is monitored by the sensor, wherein the software allows the sensor and controller to count the number of links in the strand of sausages, track the length of the individual segments of sausage in between successive links, and monitor the diameter and contour of the strand of sausages.

The controller **40** is also in electronic communication with the sausage encasing machine such that the controller **40** has the ability to slow down, speed up, or stop the machine based upon the output signal from the sensor **172** to maintain that the completed strand of sausages conforms to the desired standards. If the controller **40** determines that the space in between successive links in the strand **34** of sausages is too short (the sensed occurrence of links is sensed too frequently), the controller speeds up operation of the sausage encasing machine to lengthen the individual segments of sausage. Conversely, if the controller **40** determines that the space in between successive links in the strand of sausages is too long (the sensed occurrence of links is sensed too infrequently), the controller **40** slows down operation of the sausage encasing machine to lengthen the individual segments of sausage. If the controller **40** determines that no links are present in the chain of sausages for a predetermined amount of time, controller determines that a break in the casing has occurred and controller will shut down sausage encasing machine. The controller **40** also will shut down, or alternatively, alter the operation of the sausage encasing machine if the controller determines that the diameter of the strand **34** of sausages is either too large or too small. In addition, at the end of the strand **34**, the controller **40** will speed up or slow down the conveyor **34** based upon the links remaining after the last full loop so as to form a smaller or larger loop to catch and secure the strand over a hook.

In another embodiment, a pneumatic flow sensor on the exhaust of the follower cylinder provides input to the controller. This information, in conjunction with other operating parameters, is used to determine whether proper feeding of the casing into the chuck is occurring. An undesirable situation, such as but not limited to casing wrapping on the stuffing horn, will interrupt the expected flow through the sensor, allowing the controller to pause or stop production and inform the operator of a problem.

The adjustable conveyor **38** includes a frame **174**, an adjustment member **176**, and an operating platform **178**. The operating platform **178** is supported by the frame **174**, and includes hooks **180** driven by a chain **182** which rotate around the periphery of the operating platform **178**. The conveyor lays in a horizontal or vertical frame. At one end of the operating platform is a loading point **184** adjacent to the output end of a sausage encasing machine where a completed, looped strand **34** of sausages is loaded onto hooks **180**.

The lower section of the frame has a base **186** with support members **188** extending upwardly therefrom. In one embodiment, wheels **190** are provided on the bottom of the base **186**. The upper section of the frame includes sleeves **192** adjustably mounted onto each of the four support members **188** of the lower section of the frame to allow the operating platform **178** to be raised or lowered. The upper section additionally includes segments **194**, each segment having a bottom end **196** pivotably mounted to each sleeve and a top end **198** pivotably mounted to the operating platform **178**.

The adjustment member **176** causes the segments **194** to rotate or pivot to adjust the position of the operating platform

**178**. In one embodiment the adjustment member **176** is a turnbuckle. The turnbuckle is connected at a bottom end to the base **186** and at a top end to the top end of one of the segments **194**. Alternatively, the top end of the turnbuckle **176** is connected to the operating platform **178**. Rotation of the turnbuckle in one direction causes the turnbuckle **176** to telescope inward, and rotation of the turnbuckle **176** in the opposite direction causes the turnbuckle **176** to telescope outward, thereby rotating each segment radially in unison to adjust the position of the operating platform. As such, the loading point **184** is easily aligned with the output end of the linking chains.

Alternatively, the platform adjustment member is any device which would cause the segments, and, accordingly, the operating platform to rotate, including but not limited to a motor mounted to at least one segment, a ratcheting mechanism, or a pneumatic or hydraulic cylinder.

What is claimed is:

**1.** A twister for processing meat, comprising:

a housing;

a chuck disposed within the housing;

a rotatable member mounted to the chuck,

a sleeve attached to the rotatable member, the sleeve having a first arm that extends outwardly from an axis of rotation of the chuck, and a second arm that extends along an axis of rotation of the chuck in spaced relation to the chuck thereby forming a channel within the sleeve;

a third arm connected to the housing, wherein the third arm extends into the channel and wherein the third arm extends around the chuck; and

at least one bearing mounted within the housing and shielded from the chuck by the third arm connected to the housing and a space positioned between the chuck and the third arm connected to the housing such that significantly less heat is produced as the at least one bearing is non-contact to the chuck.

**2.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing is disposed between the third arm of the housing and the sleeve.

**3.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing is shielded from the chuck by the sleeve.

**4.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing is received within an opening of the sleeve.

**5.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing engages a second housing section on a side adjacent the chuck.

**6.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing engages the sleeve on a side opposite the chuck.

**7.** The twister of claim **1** wherein when the rotatable member rotates a second housing member does not rotate.

**8.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the at least one bearing is received within a U-shaped opening of the sleeve.

**9.** The twister of claim **8** wherein a portion of a second housing section is positioned within the U-shaped opening of the sleeve between the chuck and the at least one bearing.

**10.** The twister of claim **8** wherein the housing is formed of a first housing member and a second housing member, and a portion of the second housing member is positioned within the U-shaped opening of the sleeve between the chuck and the at least one bearing and includes a bearing race thereon.

**11.** The twister of claim **1** wherein the third arm is positioned between the sleeve and a first housing member.

**12.** The twister of claim **1** wherein a bearing race is connected to the sleeve on a surface facing the chuck.

**13.** The twister of claim **1** wherein a bearing race is connected to a second housing on a surface facing away from the chuck.

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14. The twister of claim 1 wherein at least one bearing isolator is positioned between the sleeve and a second housing member.

15. The twister of claim 1 wherein when the rotatable member rotates a second housing member does not rotate.

16. A twister for processing meat, comprising:

a housing having a first housing member and a second housing member;

a chuck disposed within the housing;

a rotatable member mounted to the chuck,

a sleeve connected to the rotatable member that extends along the chuck;

a channel formed in the sleeve;

at least one bearing positioned in the channel;

an arm of the second housing member positioned between the sleeve and the at least one bearing such that a space is positioned between an inward surface of the arm of the second housing and exterior surface of the sleeve;

wherein when the rotatable member is rotated the arm of the second housing and the space between the arm of the second housing and the exterior surface of the sleeve insulates the chuck from heat generated by the at least one bearing.

17. The twister of claim 16 wherein a portion of the second housing member is disposed between the at least one bearing and the sleeve.

18. The twister of claim 16 wherein the at least one bearing is shielded from the chuck by a portion of a second housing member.

19. The twister of claim 16 wherein the at least one bearing engages the second housing member on a side adjacent the chuck.

20. The twister of claim 16 wherein the at least one bearing engages the sleeve on a side opposite the chuck.

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21. The twister of claim 16 wherein the at least one bearing is received within a U-shaped opening of the sleeve.

22. A twister for processing meat, comprising:

a housing having a first housing member and a second housing member;

a chuck disposed within the housing;

a rotatable member mounted to the chuck;

a sleeve connected to the rotatable member, the sleeve having a first arm which extends away from an axis of rotation of the chuck, the sleeve having a second arm connected to the first arm, wherein the second arm extends along an axis of rotation of the chuck thereby forming a channel between the second arm and the chuck;

a third arm of a second housing member extends into and is positioned within the channel between at least one bearing and the chuck;

a space positioned between the inward surface of the third arm of the second housing member and an exterior surface of the chuck;

wherein when the rotatable member is rotated the second housing member does not rotate;

wherein when the rotatable member is rotated, the arm of the second housing member and the space between the arm of the second housing and the chuck insulates the chuck from heat generated by rotation of the rotatable member.

23. The twister of claim 22 wherein a bearing race is connected to the second housing on a surface facing away from the chuck.

24. The twister of claim 22 wherein a bearing race is connected to the sleeve on a surface facing the chuck.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
**CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION**

PATENT NO. : 9,089,148 B2  
APPLICATION NO. : 13/494264  
DATED : July 28, 2015  
INVENTOR(S) : Andrew W. Maddux

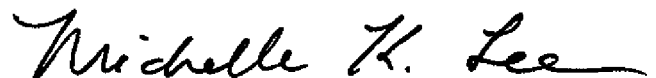
Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the claims,

Column 9, line 2, delete “isolator” after the word bearing.

Signed and Sealed this  
Twelfth Day of January, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle K. Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Michelle K. Lee  
*Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office*